



MONTHLY BULLETIN

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SEPTEMBER 2008

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

DEAF AWARENESS WEEK IS SEPTEMBER 21ST -27TH

Deaf Awareness week is held annually during the last full week (Sunday through Saturday) of September in commemoration of the first World Congress of the Deaf held that week in 1951. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is an international organization composed of 120 national associations of the deaf which, in collaboration with the United Nations, serves all countries in the enhancement of the social, economic and cultural lives of deaf and hard of hearing people. Some of the objectives of Deaf Awareness Week are to learn about types,



degrees, and causes of hearing loss and other audiological information, to become familiar with terminology related to deafness, to understand the functions of assistive devices used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing; to better understand an interpreter's role, and to have a better understanding of deaf culture.

If you know of any events taking place in Maryland for Deaf Awareness Week, send the information to ODHH at odhh@gov.state.md.us and we will forward the information to our distribution list.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Lyndon Johnson once said, "We preach the virtues of democracy abroad. We must practice its duties here at home. Voting is the first duty of democracy." It is this first responsibility that each of us takes to insure that the freedoms and beliefs this country was built on is preserved generation to generation. With each new election, we are faced with issues that impact the quality of our lives. Becoming educated voters can assist us with understanding the process and the choices we need to make.

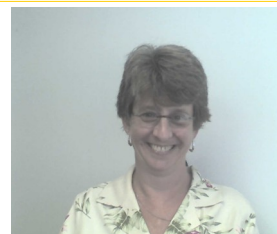
Reviewing information from each candidate (pages 2 & 3) is one way to gain information. ODHH is participating in four (4) statewide forums in conjunction with the Maryland Disability Law Center, to provide Maryland residents with disabilities the opportunity to become informed, energized and motivated to go to the polls. We look forward to seeing you and welcome your participation in these forums, which are scheduled in Frederick, Salisbury, Greenbelt and Baltimore City. In addition, we are available to try and answer any questions you

might have...so feel free to contact our office.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize Deaf Awareness Week (page 1). As part of its mission, ODHH is actively involved in working with state and local government agencies and private constituents and stakeholders to increase awareness and sensitivity to accessibility issues for deaf and hard of hearing constituents. Our increased visibility in the community, and our goal of promoting equal access for all Marylanders by providing expertise that enhances the general welfare of Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents, is resulting in many opportunities for us to meet the community. We look forward to your support and involvement as we continue our outreach and education work.

Be well – and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Lisa



ODHH

PROGRAMS

- *Awareness Training and Technical Assistance*
- *Constituent Services*
- *Community Outreach and Education*

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ELECTION 2008

The conventions are over. The Democratic and Republican parties have selected their nominees. Now begins the mad dash to the White House which will end in either the first African American president or the first female vice president being inaugurated. Are you ready to participate in this historic election?

The first step in participating in the 2008 Presidential Election is registering to vote. If you are not registered to vote and are eligible to register to vote in Maryland, you have until Tuesday, October 14, 2008 to do so. To register to vote, you must:

- Be a U.S. citizen;
- Be a Maryland resident;
- Be at least 18 years old by the next general election;
- Not be under guardianship for mental disability;
- Not have been convicted of buying or selling votes;
- Not have been convicted of a felony, or if you have, you have completed serving a court ordered sentence of imprisonment, including any term of parole or probation for the conviction.

You can obtain the application online by visiting http://www.elections.state.md.us/voter_registration/application.html. Once you have filled out your voter



registration form, you can either take it to one of the places listed above or mail it to your local Board of Elections.

The ODHH staff are voter registration volunteers. If you would like us to come to a meeting or event and register individuals to vote, we would be happy to do so. Please e-mail Julie Anne Schafer at jschafer@gov.state.md.us for more information.

The second step in participating in the election is to become familiar with the candidates and their policies. In this issue of the bulletin you will find information about the candidates of both major political parties as it relates to disability rights and empowerment. To find out about other issues important to you, visit both candidates websites to find out where they stand. The NAD also has a wealth of information, including a recently posted blog, about the upcoming election. Visit <http://www.nad.org/Vote2008> for more information.

The third step is to vote on election day. The Presidential election is on Tuesday, November 4, 2008. The polls will be open from 7 AM until 8 PM. For more information, or to find your polling place, visit <http://www.elections.state.md.us/voting/index.html>.

BARACK OBAMA—DEMOCRAT

On August 28, 2008 Barack Obama accepted the Democratic Party's nomination for President of the United States. Obama served in the Illinois State Senate from 1997-2004 and in the United States Senate from 2005-Present. His running mate, Senator Joe Biden, is from Delaware and has been a United States Senator since 1973. Barack Obama has a four-part plan to empower people with disabilities.

Please note that the following information is taken from the campaign's website, www.barackobama.com, and does not represent the views of ODHH or the State of Maryland.

Providing Americans with Disabilities Educational Opportunities

Senator Obama, an advocate of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), will push for the IDEA to be fully funded. When enacted, Congress promised to fund 40% of each state's cost to implement the Act but has since only funded about half of what it promised. Furthermore, he will invest \$10 billion per year in early intervention educational and developmental programs for children between zero and five, including additional support for Universal Screening programs.

Ending Discrimination and Promoting Equality of Opportunity for People with Disabilities

Senator Obama is a strong supporter of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Restoration Act, which would overturn the Supreme Court decisions that limit the ADA's coverage and

effectiveness and will sign it into law as president. Obama also pledges to appoint judges and justices who respect laws designed to protect people with disabilities and to increase funding to enforce anti-discrimination laws.

Increasing Employment Rate of Workers with Disabilities

As president, Obama will make the federal government an example to other employers by hiring workers with disabilities. He will also direct all federal departments and agencies to come into full compliance with Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act. He also plans to provide private-sector employers with resources to accommodate employees with disabilities and will encourage the private sector to take advantage of existing tax benefits to hire more people with disabilities.

Part Four: Supporting Independent, Community-Based Living for Americans with Disabilities

Barack Obama supports a fully funded Help America Vote Act, which enables people with disabilities to cast their vote privately and independently. He also opposes voter ID laws that require mandatory photo identification at polling places, which would disproportionately effect the more than 3 million Americans with disabilities who lack government issued ID. Barack Obama will also invest in assistive technology to make community-based living a reality for more people.



2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VOTER FORUMS



eliminate barriers that prevent people with disabilities from voting and to ensure their access to the voting process.

2008 Voter Forums

MDLC, with 20 co-sponsors (including ODDH), is hosting a series of voter forums across Maryland designed to give people with an interest in disability issues a chance to register to vote, test the voting machines, and hear from the Democratic and Republican campaigns about their positions on disability issues. The forums will be held in Salisbury (9/18), Frederick (9/22), Greenbelt (9/23), and Baltimore City (10/1). ASL interpreters will be available at all locations, and refreshments will be served.

Voter Registration, Outreach and Training

MDLC's voting project seeks to increase voter participation by

The Maryland Disability Law Center has a federal grant under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to improve access to voting for people with disabilities. The goal of MDLC's voting project is to identify and

increasing voter registration and by providing training in the community about the voting process. They distribute a "Voter Bill of Rights" document to help people with disabilities understand their rights in the election process. If you are interested in having MDLC provide training to a group of individuals with disabilities, please contact Kim Berney at 1.800.233.7201 ext. 2492.

Salisbury

Thursday, September 18th

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Dove Pointe

1225 Mt. Hermon Road

Salisbury, Maryland 21801

Greenbelt

Tuesday, September 23rd

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Multipurpose Room

Greenbelt Community Center

15 Crescent Road

Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Frederick

Monday, September 22nd

1:30 PM to 3:30 PM

Community Room-1st Floor

C. Burr Artz Public Library

110 East Patrick Street

Frederick, Maryland 21701

Baltimore City

Wednesday, October 1st

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Meyerhoff Multipurpose Rm

The League for People

with Disabilities

1111 E. Cold Spring Lane

Baltimore, MD 21701

JOHN MCCAIN—REPUBLICAN

Senator John McCain became the Republican Party's nominee for president on September 4, 2008, accepting the nomination during the Republican National Convention. McCain served in the US House of Representatives from 1983-1987 and has served in the US Senate from 1987-Present. His running mate, Sarah Palin, has been the Governor of Alaska since 2006.

Please note that the following information is taken from the campaign's website, www.johnmccain.com, and does not represent the views of ODDH or the State of Maryland.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

Senator McCain was a cosponsor of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) but believes we must clarify the definition of a disability to assure full protection for those the law is intended to serve. He supports the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 passed by the House and intends to support a Senate version that adheres to the same principles.

Individual Autonomy and Independent Living

Senator McCain believes that when the government does its duty by extending aid to Americans with disabilities, it should not do so in a heavy-handed way that restricts personal freedom. As president, he will work to enact legislation that would build on the principles of the Money Follows the Person Initiative and will increase choices, to expand freedom, to open doors, and to allow

citizens with disabilities to live where they want and to go where they wish.

Caring for Disabled Veterans

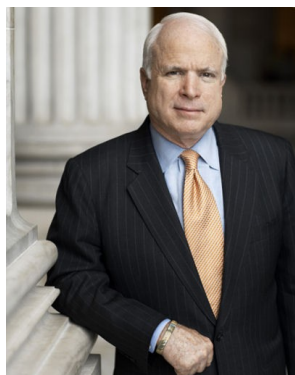
As a veteran himself, John McCain is a strong advocate for caring for disabled veterans. He has fought to ensure that veterans with

service-connected disabilities can receive the retirement benefits that they have earned, as well as the disability compensation benefits that they are entitled to. He has also worked to ensure that veterans can have their disability claims processed in a timely manner, working with the VA to rectify its huge backlog of claims and providing additional resources for that purpose.

Combating Autism in America

Senator McCain cosponsored the Combating Autism Act of 2006, which aimed to increase public awareness and screening of autism spectrum disorder, promote the use of evidence-based

interventions, and create autism Centers of Excellence for Autism Spectrum Disorder Research and Epidemiology. As president, McCain will work to ensure children are diagnosed early and will strengthen the educational system so that our schools can meet the needs of children with autism. He will also work to ensure that individuals with autism will receive the support they need throughout their lifespan.



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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ODHH ON THE MOVE

September 2008

Deaf Awareness Day
Saturday, September 13, 9 AM—4 PM
National Aquarium in Baltimore
Baltimore, MD

Hearing Loss Association of America Chapter Meeting
Tuesday, September 16, 7 PM—9 PM
Rockville Library
Rockville, MD

Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Meeting
Wednesday, September 17, 6 PM—9 PM
Hearing and Speech Agency
Baltimore, MD

Universal Newborn Hearing Screening
Thursday, September 18, 12 PM—2 PM
Hearing and Speech Agency
Baltimore, MD

Columbia Community Church Health Fair
Saturday, September 20, 11 AM—3 PM
Columbia Community Church
Columbia, MD

October 2008

Howard County Commission on Disabilities Award Program
Thursday, October 2, 7 PM—9 PM
The Bain Center
Columbia, MD

Please note that ODHH will be closed on Monday, October 13, 2008 in observance of Columbus Day



In honor of Deaf Awareness week, ODHH would like to Highlight the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). Established in Rome, Italy, in 1951, WFD is an international, non-governmental central organization of national associations of Deaf people, with a current membership of associations in 127 countries worldwide. Associate members, international members and individual members also make up WFD's membership base.

WFD's philosophy is one of equality, human rights and respect for all people, regardless of race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual preference, age and all other differences. WFD supports and promotes in its work the many United Nations conventions on human rights, with a focus on Deaf people who use sign language, and their friends and family. WFD works with the aim of solidarity and unity to make the world a better place. For more information, visit <http://wfdeaf.org/>.

BECOME AN ELECTION JUDGE

What is an Election Judge?

An Election Judge plays a very important role in the electoral process by administering voting procedures in an assigned precinct and ensuring a fair and accessible election for all eligible voters. Without Election Judges, there would be no elections!

Election Judges receive training before the election and serve on Election Day from 6:00 a.m. until all duties are completed after the polls close at 8:00 p.m.

Why should you be an Election Judge?

You will be paid for working on Election Day and for the training you receive. The amount of money you will be paid varies by county.

You will receive an increased

appreciation for the democratic process.

You will have facilitated the right to vote for your fellow citizens.

Who can be an Election Judge?

Under Maryland law, you can serve as an Election Judge if you are a registered voter in Maryland and can speak, read, and write English. Bilingual Election Judges are also needed.

How can I be an Election Judge?

In order to become an Election Judge, contact your country board of elections (http://www.elections.state.md.us/about/county_boards.html.) You can also visit http://www.elections.state.md.us/get_involved/election_judges.html for more information.